

Convention and Tourism Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 6, 2006 – Minutes

Members Present: Gerald Cook, Marlene Leister, Bette Timmel, Ben Vidricksen, Dave Miller, Jennifer Sturges, Abner Perney, Kathy Tolbert

Members Absent: Tricia Weems

Guests/Staff Present: Mike Harmon – Best Western Mid America Inn; Sylvia Rice, Tiffany Benien, Jo Ann McClure, Andi Pahl – Chamber Staff

Minutes

The Minutes of the May 2006 meeting were reviewed.

Financial Statement

The April Financial Statement was reviewed.

Division Updates:

Tourism Market

Sylvia gave the following tourism market update:

- **Smith Travel Research** – Sylvia reported on the Smith Travel Research numbers for April citing a 11.6% increase for the month, a .2% drop in daily rate and an 11.3% increase in RevPAR, compared to April 2005.
- **TIAK** – Sylvia attended TIAK's Executive Committee meeting June 3. There were three primary items of discussion: 1) The 2006 Tourism Conference to be held in Dodge City and the changes and challenges to be addressed for that; 2) New surveys that are coming out and the follow up for them, including a membership drive; 3) Planning process for a strategic tourism plan for the state led by Senator Jordan to be put together in the coming months. The Board of Directors meeting will be in Wilson June 8.
- **Advertising** – Sylvia handed out copies of the ad placed in *AAA Journeys*. Follow-up mailings have been sent to 2,200 ad responses thus far. An ad was also placed in the Johnson County *Sun* for travel close to home. TV spots are being done out of Hays, the Smoky Hill River Festival is the focus of the current spot.
- **"Sundays in Salina"** – A mailing piece of discounts to hotels and restaurants including a list of things to do in Salina was created to send out in response to ads, and to entice people to visit on Sundays.
- **Smoky Hill River Festival** – A schedule of the Smoky Hill River Festival was distributed to the Committee. The Art Car event is new this year. Sylvia sent Festival "invitations" to the KDOC Travel & Tourism staff.
- **Tour Kansas** – Tour Kansas met in Larned May 17 to begin planning for the Kansas East Showcase. Salina is being considered for the September 20 event, which would be held in Heritage Hall at the Salina Bicentennial Center. The event has a marketplace atmosphere and travel planners come in just for the day.
- **Calendar of Events** – The Chamber now lists a community calendar of events on its web site. We are encouraging participants to submit their own events, which are then subject to approval before being listed.
- **See America Week** – A new name for National Tourism Week and some new activities marked the week starting May 13. This year Bette Timmel and Marlene Leister, along with staff members, posed as "secret shoppers" at hotels throughout Salina. Responses to different questions were good in general and most front-line employees were found to be friendly. Helpful responders were rewarded with a \$5.00 bill and a Customer Service Star.
- **Other Items** – Sylvia announced that the latest issue of *Kansas* magazine has some great coverage of Salina in it. Mike Harmon reported that some destinations are now giving fuel incentives to motorcoaches for overnights. They could include a gift card for \$100 in fuel to be spent locally and have parameters set aside such as giving the incentive to the first 50 responders.

Sports Market

Tiffany reported on the following sports events:

- **Triple Crown Sports** – Both Triple Crown Sports tournaments scheduled for Salina in May were cancelled. The first had 30 teams registered and here ready to play, but was rained out. The second tournament was cancelled due to lack of teams signed up. They are still looking to come to Salina next year.
- **KSHSAA 4A State Baseball and Softball** – Salina has hosted the 4A tournaments for three years now. We have received some very positive comments from the schools involved. Friday's first baseball game was delayed by rain so Friday's games ran until midnight. Softball games stayed on schedule. Bishop won in baseball and Augusta won in softball. There were 3,123 paid admissions with another 300 in coaches and others. A lot of

media was on hand for the tournament including one TV station out of Topeka. KSHSAA was very complimentary of our efforts.

- Upcoming Car Shows – Tiffany announced that there would be three upcoming car shows this summer. The first is on Father's Day at Rolling Hills Wildlife Adventure. The Central City Street Rods are holding their 23rd annual car show June 23-24 at Thomas Park. They printed a brochure this year and are expecting the show to be bigger and better than in the past with more events planned. Then Kustom Kemps of America returns to Thomas Park July 28-30. Jerry Titus of Missouri is president of the club. More than 500 cars were entered last year and it is also expected to be a larger event this year. They are working on improving parking for the event.
- Salina Hospitality Group – The Hospitality group is trying to familiarize local hotels with large groups that hold their events in Salina. Training for front-end employees is being stressed so they may recognize and develop a good report with these guests.
- NASCAR Driver Kyle Petty – The Kyle Petty charity ride across the country will be stopping in Salina July 26 for an overnight. This car and motorcycle caravan will leave Idaho on July 22 and arrive in Ashville, NC on July 30. The Petty organization is working with their press group to get a release out to the media soon. Details on our involvement will be provided later on.

Convention Market

Jo Ann gave the following convention update:

- Jo Ann announced that the Kansas Grain & Feed Association has accepted our bid for their 2007 convention. We now have a signed contract from this group, which has not been in Salina for more than 10 years.
- Jo Ann also announced that a contract has been signed with the Kansas Insurance Agents for 2007 and they are still a possibility for 2008.
- The Red Coach Inn is now under new management and undergoing a facelift. Renovations inside and out are scheduled to be completed in the next six months.
- The Kansas Square Dance Convention was in Salina last weekend. Jo Ann gave a welcome speech and Andi managed the information booth. Jo Ann also met with their Executive Search Committee that is looking for a site for their ROUNDALAB convention in 2008. They like the Salina Bicentennial Center and asked Jo Ann for a proposal. Salina is in the running with Wichita for this convention. 2008 is the year the National convention will be held in Wichita so due to timing, the annual Kansas Square Dance Convention will not be held in Salina that year. We are hoping to replace it with the ROUNDALAB convention.
- The United Postal Workers held their convention here last month and a lot of donations were made to our local Food Bank. This convention has great state support. The Kansas Electric Coop also held their convention here last month.
- For the first time, Our Diamond Miss will hold their pageant in Salina at Sacred Heart High School on June 24. They are looking for a National site for 2009 and Jo Ann will be meeting with them in regard to that event.

Gerald Cook gave a report on the Chamber's web site updating. A report cited the top interests of users is hotels, events and attractions. Counters have been placed for each business. Approximately 158,000 to 168,000 people are looking at the site monthly. The trend is for people to do more research online; 60% is visitor related. Gerald also announced that Amy Hall has joined the Chamber staff, as the new manager of information technology.

Mike Harmon reported that the annual Run for the Wall was in Salina on May 27 and picked up 80 riders from the Salina area. Local dignitaries were invited to speak to the group of 750. A meal was served. Mike is hoping the group will continue to stay in Salina although there is talk of it moving eastward.

Kathy Tolbert announced that the annual Father's Day car show would be held June 18 at Rolling Hills Wildlife Adventure. She also reported that more than 9,000 school children visited in May with their biggest day at 2,000. Higher fuel prices may keep attendance numbers down this summer.

Ben Vidricksen said the planned Scout Museum is still having problems obtaining a building permit but will appeal.

Next Meeting

The next Convention & Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting will be held July 11 at the Chamber.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming meetings, conventions and events were noted.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35am.